"The Path to Economic Prosperity"

Aboriginal Women's Conference
March 12th-14th, 2008
St. John's, NL

CONFERENCE REPORT

Newfoundland
Labrador

The following report is dedicated to the life and work of Mary Mae Osmond. Throughout her life, Mary Mae worked tirelessly for the betterment of Aboriginal women and her community. She was a well-respected leader and an important role model for Innu women and Aboriginal women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundland Labrador

July 31, 2008

The following is the conference report for the third annual provincial Aboriginal Women's Conference that was held March 12 to14, 2008.

The conference proved to be a successful forum for Aboriginal Women from communities across Newfoundland and Labrador to openly share their concerns and needs with officials from the Provincial Government, Aboriginal governments and a number of educational and community organizations.

It is a priority for me, and for the whole of the Williams Government, to work in partnership with Aboriginal Women to help find solutions to the issues that exist in their communities.

I would like to thank all the Aboriginal women who participated in the conference and spoke candidly about their needs and concerns as well as all those who helped in the planning and implementation of the conference, especially the conference steering committee.

I encourage all decision makers to read this report and to work with Aboriginal women to find solutions to the issues that are highlighted.

Joan Burke
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Forward

The third annual Aboriginal Women's Conference was the continuation of a commitment made by the Williams Government to advance the status of Aboriginal women in Newfoundland and Labrador. The hope is that the recommendations and observations contained in this report will increase the open and direct communication and consultation between the Provincial Government and Aboriginal women.

The conference steering committee chose the theme, "The Path to Economic Prosperity" based on the growing economy in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially in the natural resource and tourism industries.

Conference planners and partners are grateful to have had the opportunity to assist in the gathering of Aboriginal women. It has been an honour to support the gathering and to receive histories, highlights and issues that affect Aboriginal women and their communities. It has been an opportunity to demonstrate that working together can make a difference.

Conference organizers would like to express their deepest respect and thanks to all elders who attended and shared their knowledge and strength to help prepare for the journey.

Thank you also to the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Honourable Patty Pottle, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs for their support in making this conference possible.

Executive Summary

The third annual provincial Aboriginal Women's Conference took place from March 12 to 14, 2008 in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador (Appendix A). The conference brought together over 30 women from a number of Aboriginal communities from across Newfoundland and Labrador including Innu, Inuit, Mi'kmaq and Métis as well as Aboriginal women living in urban areas. The Honourable Joan Burke, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the Honourable Patty Pottle, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Honourable Charlene Johnson, Minister of Environment and Conservation represented the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The conference's theme, "The Path to Economic Prosperity," took Aboriginal women a step closer to the good life and built on the themes of past conferences and helped guide them in their work around economic development.

The first conference report listed a number of issues that Aboriginal women from across the province needed addressed. The three top priorities included: 1) preservation of culture, language and traditions; 2) justice and family violence; and 3) poverty.

The second conference focused on the second and third of the above priorities and discussed the current justice system, family violence and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

For the third conference, the steering committee determined that Aboriginal women needed to come together to discuss how best to ensure that Aboriginal communities were included in the province's increasing economic development and to work together to protect and conserve their land and resources.

The conference delegates represented a wide range of ages, occupations and disciplines, creating an excellent cross section of strengths and opinions. Representatives from the Provincial Government, community and educational organizations, Aboriginal groups and elders were invited to participate in the conference by attending numerous sessions, the banquet evening and the closing plenary session.

The conference allowed Aboriginal women to speak directly to the Provincial Government about their needs and the needs of their communities as well as an opportunity for Aboriginal women to come together to share their culture, language, and stories with each other and develop a commonality of purpose.

Aboriginal women play an important role in bringing social and economic change to their communities. They are the keepers of their culture, language and wisdom. By hosting this conference the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, has once again offered its support to Aboriginal women in their leadership role. This conference continues the dialogue between Aboriginal women and the decision-makers responsible for taking action.

Background

When Premier Danny Williams and Minister Joan Burke travelled to communities along Labrador's north coast during their first term with the Provincial Government, they saw firsthand the issues and needs of Aboriginal women. Strong relationships were built with many Aboriginal women during these visits, which ultimately led to the first Aboriginal Women's Conference in 2005.

On March 8, 2005, Minister Burke announced funding for an annual conference that would bring provincial leaders and Aboriginal women together to identify and find solutions for critical social and economic issues. A steering committee was formed consisting of Aboriginal women from all Aboriginal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and supports were provided by staff from the Women's Policy Office and the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

From December 2005 to February 2006 consultations were held with Aboriginal women from 50 communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The Williams Government was given suggestions regarding conference topics, logistics and objectives.

On March 13 to 15, 2006 the first-ever provincial Aboriginal Women's Conference - "The Path to the Good Life" - was held in Happy-Valley Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador. Key topics of the conference included culture, healthcare, governance, violence prevention, justice, education and training, housing, and access to programs, funding and employment.

In September 2006, planning began for the second Aboriginal Women's Conference. A steering committee was established once again and it was agreed that the theme of the conference would be "The Path to the Good Life: Moving Forward, Building Strength" and would focus on justice, poverty reduction and cultural preservation.

The second conference took place on November 23 to 26, 2006 in Stephenville, Newfoundland and Labrador. Over 30 Aboriginal women gathered from all over the province and heard from representatives from the Provincial Government as well as community organizations.

In Budget 2007, the Williams Government strengthened their commitment to Aboriginal women by announcing an increase in funding to host the third annual conference. Planning for the third conference began in October 2007. The steering committee, made up of eight Aboriginal women, choose economic development as the focus of the conference.

The third conference, "The Path to Economic Prosperity", took place in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador from March 12 to 14, 2008. This conference gave Aboriginal women the chance to hear from, and voice their concerns to, representatives from federal, provincial and Aboriginal governments, as well as community and educational organizations.

Conference Proceedings

Day One:

The conference began on the evening of March 12 with a social, which gave participants the opportunity to view information booths set up by government departments and community and educational organizations (Appendix B). Delegates also heard from MHA Susan Sullivan who bought greetings on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Each member of the steering committee then welcomed participants to the conference and hung their cultural/community flags. Conference facilitator, Judy White, concluded the evening by going through the agenda for the following two days.

Day Two:

Delegates awoke to a snowstorm on day two of the conference. Due to the road conditions the scheduled throat singers could not attend the event. However, delegates filled this time with storytelling and drumming.

The Honourable Patty Pottle, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs then addressed the delegation. She spoke about her life as an Aboriginal woman and provincial leader, as well as how important it is for Aboriginal women to have a strong voice in the economic development occurring in their communities.

The delegation next heard from Pam Toope, a representative from the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment regarding labour market opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador in the present and future. Ms. Toope's presentation led to a detailed discussion around the need for cultural and gender specific statistics regarding the labour market and employment needs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Next on the agenda was a presentation from Mr. Jerry Dick from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and Mrs. Judy Sparkes-Giannou from Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador. Both Mr. Dick and Mrs. Sparkes-Giannou spoke about the growing industry of tourism, culture and recreation and how Aboriginal communities can take advantage of this growth and become a key part of the industry.

This presentation resulted in the liveliest discussion of the day as delegates debated how Aboriginal communities could be protected from environmental damage due to tourist traffic, as well as the desire to be consulted with by the Provincial Government during tourism campaigns and decisions. Many delegates were also very interested in how their traditional talents could be included in cultural industry.

While delegates enjoyed their lunch they heard from Mi'kmaq, Innu and Urban Aboriginal women who reported on events in their communities that had occurred in the past year. Like the previous conference, these stories brought both tears and laughter as women shared their stories of sorrow and achievement.

After lunch, conference participants were entertained by a presentation organized by members of the Inuit delegation. Inuit youth demonstrated and explained the origins of a variety of Inuit games and throat singing.

The final order of business for the day was the delegate discussions. Delegates, grouped by community, came together to discuss what they had heard in day one and the issues that they felt needed to be further explored. The main issues that were discussed were:

1) Labour Market Opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador:
- What are the main issues relating to the labour market in your community?
- How can the system serve Aboriginal communities?
- How can Aboriginal women be included in the future of the labour market?

2) Economic Prosperity in Tourism and Culture:
- What are the main issues relating to tourism and culture in your community?
- What are the three key things that need to be done in order to support Aboriginal communities in contributing to the industry of tourism and culture?
- How can Aboriginal women be included in the industry?

When discussing the labour market, most delegates felt that the main issues in their communities were out-migration, lack of permanent employment, low minimum wage, lack of language and cultural understanding and poor childcare supports. Aboriginal women felt that offering more language programs in their communities could solve many of the issues, as well as giving incentives for youth to finish their education, such as guaranteed job placements. All agreed that Aboriginal people should have greater input into labour market decisions that affect their communities.

The main issues that arose surrounding tourism and culture were the need for more investment in cultural tourism, the environment has to be protected, and that a provincial criterion should be developed to protect communities and tourists. Delegates also suggested that sensitivity and cultural training be given to tourist guides.

Day one concluded with a prayer by Germaine Benuen.

Conference Banquet:

Conference delegates and invited guests attended a banquet ceremony (Appendix C) on the evening of March 13. Attendees heard from both the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Honourable Patty Pottle, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Appendix D).

Minister Pottle gave an update on government's actions on issues raised by Aboriginal women at the past two conferences as well as an update on recommendations resulting from the National Aboriginal Women's Summit. The minister also stressed the

importance of the Aboriginal voice in Newfoundland and Labrador and their valued input into government policies and programs.

Guests were entertained by the singing of Jennifer Hobbs and the throat singing and drumming of the Nippik Inuit Drummers. The evening concluded with a giveaway ceremony to honour those who had travelled to attend the event

Day Three:

Day three opened with a session hosted by the the Honourable Charlene Johnson, Minister of Environment and Conservation regarding the key natural resource sectors in Newfoundland and Labrador and the economic opportunities that are resulting from the growing development (Appendix E).

Next, participants heard from representatives from the Women in Resource Development Committee (WRDC) about training and development opportunities that can help women obtain employment in the trade and technology sectors. Participants were very interested to hear about the types of training and the locations that training is available, as well gave suggested as to the types of educational assistance that were needed in their communities.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs (NLOWE) were the next to meet with the delegates. NLOWE spoke about how they can help Aboriginal women start their own business or expand the existing work going on in their community. Participants spoke candidly about their experiences in business and the tools they feel they need to help generate business in their communities.

The last session of the day was held by the College of the North Atlantic (CONA). Here women discussed the educational and training opportunities available at their campuses throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

During lunch delegates listened to stories from the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI), Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN), Métis and Inuit about their accomplishments since the last conference.

After lunch, delegates broke into their groups to discuss the sessions that took place throughout the morning of day three. The main issues that were discussed were:

1) Natural Resource Opportunities:
- What are the main issues relating to the natural resource sector in your community?
- What are the key things that need to be done in order to support Aboriginal communities in contributing to the natural resource industry?
- What are the key things that can be done in order for women to take advantage of opportunities in the natural resource sector?

2) WRDC:

- How can WRDC programs assist women in your area?
- How can Aboriginal women be included in the development and implementation of future programs?

3) NLOWE:
- How can NLOWE assist women in your community?
- How can Aboriginal women be included in the development and implementation of future programs?

4) CONA:
- How can CONA assist women in your community?

When discussing opportunities in the natural resources sector participants highlighted the challenges associated with language barriers, job training, and the need for all levels of government to consult with Aboriginal women when making decisions around the development of natural resources. Discussions also centered on one specific project - Uranium Exploration near Postville.

Participants felt that WRDC needed more supports specifically for Aboriginal women and should work directly with Aboriginal women to obtain incentives for working women and to expose women to a variety of trades.

NLOWE was the least known of all organizations that presented to delegates. Aboriginal women requested that NLOWE do more to become known in Aboriginal communities as well as employ an Aboriginal woman to offer supports to women.

Delegates suggested that CONA do more to target women in training in heavy equipment operation, skilled trades and adult basic education. Also, the schools should hire Aboriginal people to offer assistance with cultural and language barriers.

The final session of the conference brought together officials from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as a number of community and educational organizations and Aboriginal governments to hear the comments, concerns and suggestions directly from Aboriginal women (Appendix F).

The conference ended with participants filling out evaluation forms (Appendix G) and a closing prayer from the Honourable Diane Gear, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women with the Nunatsiavut Government.

The Voices of Aboriginal Women: Recommendations for an improved economy

Natural Resource Opportunities

- Improved child care supports are required for Aboriginal women in every Aboriginal community so they can participate in opportunities associated with the natural resources in the regions where Aboriginal women live.
- Job mentoring opportunities should be provided by industry for Aboriginal women.
- There is a need for increased job training (ex. heavy equipment, auto mechanic) and support services for women.
- There should be an Aboriginal women's advisory group that has input in training needs related to resource development opportunities.
- Industry needs to provide Aboriginal women with increased support for transition into jobs as well as increased language/interpretation services.
- Funding criteria for resource development and training should be more flexible to include individualized needs of Aboriginal communities.
- Companies need to develop workforce readiness programs and identify types of jobs early in development projects to ensure there is time to develop and deliver training for Aboriginal communities and women.

Economic Development, Employment, Training

- An Aboriginal advisory committee should be established and be empowered to hold community consultations.
- Government departments and industry have to demonstrate an interest in working with Aboriginal women.
- Aboriginal Government's should negotiate IBAs that are inclusive of Aboriginal women.
- Education and training for careers needs to start at an earlier age.
- In order for Aboriginal women to participate in the economy, there is a need for increased childcare/family services such as:
    - childcare funding and education opportunities for caregivers
    - community facilitators for childcare providers
    - free skills development for women who choose to stay home to care for their children and then re-enter the workforce
    - representation from Aboriginal communities is required on municipal governments
- Economic development strategies need to be built at the Aboriginal community level in order to achieve an Aboriginal perspective.
- All levels of government should consult with Aboriginal women/people for their expertise about the unique needs and markets within their communities before policies are structured or decisions are made.
- Aboriginal women need to be considered business and employment partners.

- More employment and permanent work is required for Aboriginal communities and for Aboriginals in the province as well as improved work benefits.
- Long term economic development strategies are required and they need to be proactive, not reactive.
- Government officials need to respect communities and their boundaries when economic development opportunities are being discussed and planned.
- More support for language and culture in the work place is required in Aboriginal communities.
- More locally-based employment training is required.
- Companies need to develop workforce readiness programs and identify the types of jobs early in development projects to ensure there is time to develop and deliver training for Aboriginal communities and women.
- Aboriginal women support the need for an increase to minimum wage.
- More communications-based jobs are needed in Aboriginal communities.
- More incentives for students to complete school should be provided, i.e. guaranteed job placements.
- Industry should support Aboriginal people in trades.
- More Aboriginal women should be hired for decision-making roles.
- The needs of Aboriginal women employees should be listened to by employers.
- Aboriginal women need targeted employment training, and need to obtain leadership skills.
- Funding is required to supplement existing training programs to allow them to be extended to rural communities.
- Aboriginal communities need training instructors that are sensitive to cultural differences.

Tourism & Culture

- More support should be provided for the promotion of cultural tourism and more investments made in the cultural tourism sector.
- Aboriginal women need to be recognized as keepers of communities.
- More support and emphasis is required on environmental issues: economy vs. ecology in Aboriginal communities for tourism development.
- Criteria for Aboriginal cultural tourism need to be developed for communities and tourists.

Women in Resource Development (WRDC)

- Introduce training programs specifically for Aboriginal women.
- Need culturally-sensitive training and language supports.
- Greater emphasis on exposing women to a variety of trades.
- Continue and expand the OTT program.

Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs (NLOWE)

NLOWE could further assist women in Aboriginal communities by:

- Getting to know the needs of Aboriginal communities.
- Holding information sessions in communities.
- Utilizing Aboriginal radio stations and other media to promote their organization.
- Employing Aboriginal women to work with Aboriginal communities.
- Providing assistance in areas such as finance and marketing.

College of the North Atlantic (CNA)

CNA could further assist women in Aboriginal communities by:

- Targeting women to train in heavy equipment operation and skilled trades.
- Hiring Aboriginal people as tutors and trainers in schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Providing Inuktitut speaking counsellors.

Improving Government Consultation Processes

- All levels of government have to recognize that best practices should follow this process of decision:
  - Step 1: Government seeks expertise from Aboriginal community
  - Step 2: Bring opinions back to government to develop the recommendations
  - Step 3: Filter down through various organizations (ex. ACOA, Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network)
  - Step 4: Results – sustainable culturally-based economic plan and policy

APPENDIX A:
Conference Agenda

2008 Aboriginal Women's Conference
"The Path to Economic Prosperity"

Newfoundland Labrador

AGENDA
March 12th – 14th, 2008
The Capital Hotel, St. John's, NL

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

7:00pm – 9:00pm	Social Meet and Greet – Salon A ▪ Welcome from MHA Susan Sullivan ▪ Welcome and Flag Hanging by Steering Committee Members

Thursday, March 13, 2008

8:30am – 9:10am	Registration/Breakfast – Salon A
9:10am – 9:30am	Opening Ceremony – Salon A ▪ Throat Singing (Tabitha and Sherry Blake, St. John's Native Friendship Centre)
9:30am – 9:50am	Overview of the Conference Agenda (Judy White) – Salon A
9:50am – 10:00am	Welcome from the Honourable Patty Pottle, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs – Salon A
10:00am – 10:50am	Labour Market Opportunities in NL – Salon B ▪ An overview of labour market opportunities in NL in 2008 and beyond. (Pam Toope, Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment)
10:50am – 11:10am	Break
11:10am – 12:10pm	Building Economic Prosperity through Tourism, Culture and Recreation – Salon B ▪ Understanding the growing sector of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and how you can be a part of the economic opportunities. (Jerry Dick, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation & Judy Sparkes-Giannou, Hospitality NL)

12:10pm – 1:40pm	Lunch – Salon A Real Women, Real Stories ▪ On Reserve Mi'kmaq, Innu & Urban Aboriginal
1:40pm – 2:25pm	Cultural Presentation – Salon A ▪ Inuit Games: Throat singing and the teachings behind this cultural tradition.
2:25pm – 3:35pm	Delegate Discussions – Salon A ▪ Delegates come together to discuss the day's sessions and how it relates to Aboriginal communities.
3:35pm – 3:40pm	Closing Prayer (Germaine Benuen)

Thursday, March 13, 2008 - Conference Banquet
(Salon A & B)

Emcee – Judy A. White

6:30pm – 7:00pm	Opening Comments Grace (Innu- Angela Andrew, Inuit - Andrea Webb Mi'kmaq - Tammy Drew, English - Clarice Rudkowski)
7:00pm – 7:30pm	Banquet Meal
7:30pm – 7:45pm	Guest Speaker – Honourable Patty Pottle, Minster of Aboriginal Affairs
7:45pm – 8:30pm	Performance - Nippik Inuit Drummers Jennifer Hobbs
8:30pm – 8:50pm	Giveaway Ceremony
8:50pm – 9:00pm	Closing Remarks

Friday, March 14, 2008

8:00am – 8:30am	*Breakfast – Salon A*
8:30am – 8:45am	*Opening Comments – Judy White*
8:45am – 9:35am	*Natural Resource Opportunities – Salon A* ▪ *Overview of key natural resource sectors in Newfoundland and Labrador and the economic opportunities that result from the growing development* (Honourable Charlene Johnson, Minister of Environment)

9:35am – 10:25am	Women in Resource Development Committee – Salon B ▪ Learn about WRDC and training and development opportunities that can help you obtain employment in trade and technology occupations. (Anne Marie Anonsen, Women in Resource Development Committee)
10:25am – 10:45am	Break
10:45am – 11:35am	Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs (NLOWE) - Salon B ▪ Learn about NLOWE and how they can help you start your own business or expand your existing work in your community. (Mildred Montague, Business Development Coordinator, Labrador Region and Tammy Hapgood, Business Development Coordinator, Avalon Region)
11:35am – 12:25pm	College of the North Atlantic – Salon B ▪ Educational and training opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Winnie Montague, College of the North Atlantic)
12:30pm – 2:00pm	Lunch – Salon A Real Women, Real Stories ▪ FNI, NAWN, Inuit & Métis
2:00pm – 3:00pm	Delegate Discussions – Salon A ▪ Summary of what was heard and what leaders need to know.
3:00pm – 4:00pm	Plenary Discussion – Salon A ▪ Recommendations for Governments and Leaders
4:00pm – 4:10pm	Closing Remarks (Judy White) – Salon A
4:10pm – 4:20pm	Closing Prayer (Minister Diane Gear)

Departure

APPENDIX B:
Booth letter and registration form to interested organizations

February 6, 2008

Dear Interested Organization:

The 2008 Aboriginal Women's Conference will take place at the Capital Hotel in St. John's from March 12-14, 2008. The theme of this year's conference is "The Path to Economic Prosperity", and will bring together Aboriginal women from across the province as well as representatives from government and Aboriginal organizations to identify and discuss the issues most important to the lives of Aboriginal women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This year, an information sharing room has been established and will be open for all groups attending the conference to display information, as well as for outside organizations of interest to share information pertinent to Aboriginal women with conference delegates.

The Capital Hotel will provide one eight foot table as well as a table skirt and chairs for each booth in the information sharing room. Setup for the booths will take place between 4-6 pm on Wednesday, March 12th. The information sharing room will be open during the conference as follows:

- Wednesday, March 12th: 7:00–9:00 pm
- Thursday, March 13th: 8:30 am–4:30 pm and 5:30–6:30 pm
- Friday, March 14th: 8:00 am–4:30 pm

To confirm your organization's interest in obtaining a booth at this year's Aboriginal Women's Conference, please complete the enclosed registration form and return by February 22, 2008 to:

2008 Aboriginal Women's Conference
Women's Policy Office
4th Floor, West Block, Confederation Building
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6
Fax: 729-2331
E-mail: michellehynes@gov.nl.ca
ATTN: Michelle Hynes-Dawson

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding the booth registration process to Michelle Hynes-Dawson, Women's Policy Office, via telephone (729-6225) or email michellehynes@gov.nl.ca.

Registration Form

2008 Aboriginal Women's Conference
"The Path to Economic Prosperity"
Capital Hotel, St. John's
March 12-14, 2008

Booth Registration Form

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Email: _____

Booth size preferred (*check one*):

☐ **Eight feet (full booth)**
☐ **Four feet (1/2 booth)**

Number of persons to staff booth: _____

Electrical outlet needed for multimedia components (*circle one*):
Yes / No

Please be advised that all transportation and accommodation costs, as well as any other expenses incurred by individuals staffing booths at the Aboriginal Women's Conference are the sole responsibility of the sponsoring organization of the booth.

As per regulations outlined in the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, consent is required before photographs taken during the Aboriginal Women's Conference are permitted to be used by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Please check the box to indicate that you allow this use of any photographs taken of your booth or booth staff during the conference:

Signature **Date**

APPENDIX C:
Invitation to the Banquet and Plenary Session

Newfoundland
Labrador

The Honourable Joan Burke,
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
&
The 2008 Aboriginal Women's Conference
Steering Committee

Invites You to Attend the

CONFERENCE BANQUET

On Thursday, March 13th, 2008 at 6:30 PM

At the Capital Hotel, Kenmount Road, St. John's

Guest Speaker:
The Honourable Patty Pottle,
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Entertainment Provided by:
The Nippik Inuit Drummers
& Jennifer Hobbs

RSVP by March 1st, 2008 to:
Michelle Hynes-Dawson
Women's Policy Office
tel: 709-729-6225, 693-2125
email: michellehynes@gov.nl.ca

APPENDIX D:
Remarks from the Honourable Patty Pottle,
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

Good evening esteemed Elders, Ministers Burke, Dunderdale, Hedderson, Jackman, Johnson, Whalen, and Minister Diane Gear from the Nunatsiavut Government, Chief Liz LaSaga, Chief Karen White, Chief Latetia MacDonald of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians, Chief Misel Joe from Conne River and invited guests.

It is a real pleasure to be with you here this evening and to bring greetings on behalf of the Honourable Danny Williams, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador.

My friends, we have come along way. Who would have thought 20 years ago, we would be sitting here attending a conference for Aboriginal Women, and discussing the "Path to Economic Prosperity."

That being said, there is still a great deal of work to be completed, before the next generation of proud Aboriginal women can take the reigns. It is time for us to make our own path. It is time we are heard.

In the past, you may have had difficulty in getting people to take you seriously as an Aboriginal person, as a woman, and perhaps as an entrepreneur. I have some experience in these areas.

I believe that by looking forward, taking a leadership role, and discussing ideas and issues that concern Aboriginal Women, we will be on the path to more fulfilled and richer lives.

As you may know, I am from Hopedale, Labrador, an isolated community on Labrador's north coast and part of Nunatsiavut. I was born in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and I truly

love Labrador. I love the large clear skies, the northern lights, the beautiful landscapes, and the abundant wildlife. I love the diverse cultures and the heritage that can easily be experienced throughout Labrador. It's hard to describe sometimes, but going home is comforting. I am sure many you feel the same way about your hometowns.

Don't get me wrong, I like St. John's as well, as I am sure many of you do, but the weather here is...interesting.

Today has been no exception.

When I grew up, I had no idea I would be involved in government. If you told me ten years ago that I would be a Minister in our Provincial Government, I would have laughed at the idea.

But this has been a wonderful experience for me. I am proud to represent the people of Torngat Mountains as their M.H.A and as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I am pleased, as an Aboriginal woman, to represent Aboriginal peoples throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

"The Path to Economic Prosperity" is an interesting theme for our conference, and it's one I am very familiar with. I have been a business woman for 13 years. My original dream was to own a gift shop. I opened DJ's gift shop in 1995 and since then, it has expanded to include groceries and convenience items.

In 1998, the opportunity to establish a new hotel in Hopedale was presented to me. After much careful thought and business planning, I decided to pursue that opportunity. The Amaguk Inn, Amaguk being Inuktituk for "wolf," opened that year.

The hotel initially opened with 12 rooms and has steadily progressed since then. Recently, we completed major renovations and expansions that increased our available rooms to 18, adding efficiency rooms and increased meeting space.

It has been a lot of hard work, but as an Aboriginal woman, I have never been afraid of hard work.

For me, my hotel and gift shop are a labour of love. Certainly, there were many struggles, but as Aboriginal women we understand struggle.

These are very exciting times for Newfoundland and Labrador and especially Aboriginal people throughout our province. In Labrador, the Nunatsiavut Government continues to develop and provide valuable programs and services to its people. The Government of Newfoundland Labrador will continue to provide support as the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement is implemented.

On the island portion of the province, the Federation of Newfoundland Indians are preparing to vote on their own Agreement in Principle. If ratified, this agreement will set the stage for the negotiation of a final agreement that would see the registration of Mi'kmaq who are members of the FNI.

Under such an agreement it is anticipated FNI members will receive, for the first time, Aboriginal-specific programs for non-insured health benefits, post-secondary education, economic development, and core funding will be provided for the FNI.

This is truly an historic event for all those involved. Whether they choose to ratify or not to ratify the agreement, the Mi'kmaq are making history for their children and creating their own path.

Also creating their own path are the Conne River Mi'kmaq, who are currently negotiating a self-government agreement with the Provincial and Federal Government.

The Innu of Labrador continue to have open and progressive land negotiations with the province. The land claims negotiation is a detailed and lengthy process. The Provincial

Government continues to work closely with the Innu of Labrador, to work towards an Agreement in Principle, hopefully achieved in the near future.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will work cooperatively to advance the well-being of the Métis people of Labrador. It is the Provincial Government's desire to foster a good working relationship with the Labrador Métis. The province supports their efforts to seek access to federal programs and services, and would be pleased to provide assistance to achieve this.

Aboriginal women's issues are one of the top priorities of the Williams' Government. Our government remains committed to assist Aboriginal women and the province's Aboriginal communities.

One issue that concerns us greatly as a government, and myself as a Minister, is the treatment of our Aboriginal people in the justice system.

This is a very serious issue and one that is of the highest priority for Justice Minister Jerome Kennedy. Let me give you every assurance that Minister Kennedy and his officials within the Department of Justice, as well as officials with the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, along with Minister John Hickey and I, are fully engaged in this issue.

One broad-based initiative that I am especially proud of is the *Violence Prevention Initiative*. It is a six-year Initiative, with an investment of $9.2 million. In Budget 2007, the funding was increased by $200,000 with expanded criteria that came out of the National Aboriginal Women's Summit that took place last June in Corner Brook.

As Aboriginal peoples, we have a distinct cultural background. Our diverse heritages of the Innu, Mi'kmaq, Métis, and Inuit have indeed placed a large footprint in our province's history.

Just recently, I had the honour to witness and take part in the unveiling of two magnificently handcrafted Innu hunting coats at the Labrador Interpretation Centre in North West River, Labrador. We celebrated a culture, we celebrated a craft, and we celebrated the heritage of a strong and proud people.

It was the Innu woman who painted the caribou hunter coat for her husband – to help prepare him for the hunt. The coats will remain at the Rooms, until a permanent home will be constructed in Sheshatshui, Labrador.

In closing, I would like to leave you with these words from international Aboriginal recording artist Susan Aglukark, "As Aboriginal Women, the sharing of our stories, teachings and knowledge is a responsibility we all carry. It is our way, it is in each of us, and when we learn together we make our circle strong."

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Aboriginal women of Newfoundland and Labrador are strong. And while it may not always have been recognized, Aboriginal women have long contributed and will continue to contribute to the success of all Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak and please enjoy the rest of the conference.

APPENDIX E:
Remarks from the Honourable Charlene Johnson,
Minister of Environment and Conservation

- Good morning.
- On behalf of Minister Dunderdale, I would like to thank you for the invitation to participate in today's session. Minister Dunderdale sends her sincere regrets that she could not be here today to speak with you. She was looking forward to participating in this important conference.
- But as Minister of Environment and Conservation, I am happy to be able to bring the message of the opportunities in natural resource developments on her behalf.
- I am also happy to speak about our Natural Resources because I had the pleasure of serving as Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Natural Resources before becoming Minister of Environment and Conservation.
- In one way or another, most businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador benefit either directly or indirectly from our natural resource industries.
- Historically, our natural resources have been the backbone of our economy in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- However, while we have always relied on these resources to sustain our people, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and especially women and, in particular, Aboriginal women, have often not enjoyed the full benefits from these developments.
- But now, thanks to the passionate commitment of Premier Williams and our government, we have begun to change that pattern for the better. I think by now everybody in this province, indeed, throughout the country, knows that we are determined to maximize the benefits that our people enjoy from our own resource industries.
- It's especially important that we begin insisting on fair terms for our resource developments, because in the past we have lost too many of these benefits to outside interests.
- In addition to insisting on fair terms from multinational corporations and the federal government, we have also adopted a long-term, strategic planning

approach to our resource developments. There will be no more short-term giveaways for the sake of political gains. Rather, there will be well-considered, long-term strategies to ensure that we realize the promise of our precious resources for a bright and sustainable future for all the people of this province, for our children, and for our communities.

- There is no doubt that in Newfoundland and Labrador, we are fortunate to enjoy a great wealth of natural resources. This can sustain our people and our economy – today and as far into the future as we can imagine – if, and only if, we develop our resources properly. This is exactly what our government is determined to do.
- I am sure you all realize how our natural resources are supporting the people of the province and contributing to the provincial treasury like never before. And no doubt you understand some of the challenges, benefits and countless opportunities in these sectors.
- In this province last year, an average of 13,400 people were employed thanks to our natural resources. And those are only the direct jobs. Those numbers don't include the many thousands of indirect jobs that rely on our natural resource industries.
- To put it another way – in 2006, mining, energy, forestry and agrifoods accounted for approximately 45 per cent of our province's Gross Domestic Product.
- Although our natural resource industries have a great deal in common, each of them has unique challenges and opportunities. I would like to speak a little about each of them in turn - and highlight some facts that might surprise you.
- I will begin with agriculture and agrifoods rather than the more well-known energy and mining. This exciting industry is probably one of our best-kept secrets!
- Our farmers and agrifoods processors now generate approximately $500 million annually and employ 6,200 people – directly and indirectly. From 2004 to 2006, farm cash receipts increased by nearly 8 per cent.
- That translates into roughly 558 farms and 100 agrifoods manufacturers in dairy, poultry, egg, meat, vegetable, fruit, greenhouse, sod, fur and other sectors.

- It is also important to emphasize that many of these businesses are operating and providing employment in rural communities.
- This has an important economic impact in the province, but a strong agriculture sector also ensures that we have access to healthy and fresh food that is produced right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It contributes to the wellness of our people as well as the bottom line of our companies.
- For these reasons, our government, through the Department of Natural Resources, invested nearly $22-million in last year's budget to fund a variety of strategic programs and initiatives in the agrifoods branch. Just five years ago, the budget was less than half that amount. We doubled investment in this sector because we understand its value and we're doing our part to stimulate its growth.
- Much of our current focus is on providing assistance to the industry to help overcome barriers to growth and development, for example, by making land more readily available to our farmers for expanding their enterprises. We are also investing in growing the value-added side of the industry. We want to see as much value-added processing done here as possible.
- In collaboration with industry, the Department of Natural Resources is involved in several exciting initiatives to grow and diversify our agrifoods industries.
- For example, we have researched and successfully implemented a plastic mulching system for corn silage production, which significantly extends the province's growing season.
- As a result of investment in research and development, we now know that cranberries and this province have a very promising future together.
- Now that our farms have shown they can successfully grow cranberries, we are helping them move to the next level. As we recently announced, Natural Resources will invest $730,000 to further this goal.
- Another agriculture area we are very excited about is the dairy industry, where the recent growth in milk production has been truly staggering.
- Our dairy farmers joined the National Milk marketing Plan in 2001 and received an annual share of the national quota for industrial milk.

- Industrial milk is the same milk we drink every day, but it's further processed into products such as ice cream, cheese and yoghurt.
- When our dairy farmers signed onto the national quota in 2001, they were already producing nearly 34 million litres per year.
- By signing onto the national industrial milk quota, they agreed to effectively double their production in just 15 years!
- At the half-way point to 2016, Newfoundland and Labrador is already contributing approximately 20 million litres to the national quota with just 11 million more litres to meet our quota target.
- The additional production has allowed farms to expand and realize greater economies of scale. In fact, dairy farms in Newfoundland and Labrador are now, on average, the largest in Canada!
- Then there's the impressive growth of the fur industry. Pelt production has increased from just a few thousand per year to 160,000 per year in a very short period of time. The value of the fur industry is expected to be in the range of $10 million this year.
- These are just a few examples of why we are so positive about agriculture and agrifoods. There are excellent opportunities in this sector for existing farmers and virtually anyone who is willing to put in the time and hard work it takes to make a new farm succeed.
- Our second natural resource I want to talk to you about is our forest resource. As with agriculture, our forests play an absolutely essential role in the lives of thousands of our people. Loggers, saw millers, furniture makers and many others have been making a living from this resource for generations.
- For more than 100 years, the forest industry has sustained families and communities throughout our province. Indeed, our forest workers and businesses essentially built Grand Falls-Windsor and Corner Brook.
- Although the pulp and paper industry has been facing difficulties in recent years, our government truly appreciates the long-term value of our forestry industry, and has been making important investments to help the industry diversify.

- It is true that this industry is presently under tremendous pressure provincially, nationally and internationally.
- The very strong Canadian dollar has seriously cut into producers' margins, and weaker demand has cut into profitability. Unfortunately, many plants across Canada have folded under the mounting losses, including the pulp and paper operation in Stephenville.
- Despite that loss, we are confident in the future. Since demand for forest products is cyclical, we expect long-term demand to be strong.
- In this province, we are especially well-positioned to weather the storm. We have a healthy and high-quality supply of fiber that will position companies in this province to better market both traditional and innovative new forest products.
- Our producers are also strategically located to service markets in the north, and they have access to comparatively low energy and fiber costs.
- Recognizing women's need to participate in this important industry, the Department of Natural Resources has begun a review of internal processes to identify barriers and avenues for advancement of women within the sector and the Department.
- In fact, the Department of Natural Resources is currently embarking on a Gender-Based Analysis Study of the Forestry Branch.
- Another natural resource that's having an extremely positive direct impact on people throughout the province - especially in rural areas – is mining.
- In terms of exploration expenditures and gross value of mineral shipments, 2007 was the biggest year in the province's mining history.
- Our companies set a record for exploration expenditures of $138 million, which was dominated by spending on base metals - including nickel and, uranium exploration in Labrador.
- Mineral shipments reached a record level of $3.9 billion due mainly to nickel and iron-ore shipments. That's 490 per cent higher than just four years ago!
- The level of activity in the industry reflects the continuing high prices for mineral commodities and full-scale production from Voisey's Bay.

- But it also reflects something even more important - it reflects how attractive we have become as a destination for international mining investment.
- In last year's budget, the Department of Natural Resources maintained a record $2.4 million investment in the Mineral Incentive Program. This program helps individual prospectors and junior exploration companies to do important mineral exploration work all around the province.
- We also support annual prospector training courses in Stephenville and Happy Valley Goose Bay. These short-term courses provide women and men with the training they need to do their own prospecting for minerals in their own back yards and communities.
- The Department also boosted funding for geological mapping by $1 million in last year's budget. This improves our understanding of our geology and offers both local and international mineral exploration companies better information upon which to base their exploration investments.
- We have also made great strides in making our province's excellent mineral prospects available to the world by the World Wide Web. We recently put our claims-staking system online. This allows individuals and companies to stake exploration claims across the province in real time.
- These types of investments will be especially important once the current peak in the mining cycle begins to soften – as it always does. By having so much new high-quality data on hand and making it available via the web, our province will be well-positioned for continued growth in the coming years.
- Clearly the mining industry has a lot of exciting potential in our province.
- And more women are taking advantage of that potential. We know that operations such as IOC, Voisey's Bay and Duck Pond are employing more women in non traditional jobs.
- And that finally brings me to our energy sector.
- 2007 was a particularly exciting year for energy in Newfoundland and Labrador!
- It was the year that this government reached a Memorandum of Understanding on developing the Hebron oil field and finalized an agreement to develop the White Rose expansion fields.

- We also achieved industrial benefits agreements that will see as much work as possible being done in our province.
- And we finally achieved equity positions in Hebron and the White Rose expansions.
- 2007 also saw the first Call for Bids for oil and gas exploration offshore Labrador. This is the first Call for Bids in the area in approximately 30 years and is a promising sign for exploration in the region.
- Likewise, there is a great deal of oil and gas exploration activity going on in western Newfoundland. This activity is providing opportunities for local employment and for supply and service work.
- The Department of Natural Resources also released the province's first Energy Plan which charts a clear course for developing our energy resources over the next 30 years and beyond.
- The implementation of the Plan will include several important projects. The Energy Conservation and Efficiency Partnership, the Innovation Roadmap and the Petroleum Exploration Enhancement Program are just a few of the exciting initiatives that are being advanced.
- At the heart of our Energy Plan is a strategy to reinvest our earnings from our non-renewable resources into a renewable resource future, including developing the Lower Churchill hydro project.
- We have to ensure that we use the proceeds from our non-renewable developments to benefit the people of the province, not only today, but also for our future generations.
- As you are likely aware, the Lower Churchill Project is currently undergoing a thorough environmental assessment through a joint federal/provincial process. This must be completed satisfactorily before the project is authorized to proceed.
- Without prejudging the outcome of that process, this potential project would offer many benefits, particularly in Labrador.
- Jobs and business activity from the construction and operation of the project are the first and most tangible benefits. A significant portion of the jobs and business

spin-offs will occur naturally in Labrador. We will focus our efforts on maximizing benefits to Labrador through training and supplier development.

- In addition to the significant construction benefits that will accrue to the people of Labrador from the Lower Churchill, the Provincial Government - with the input of people from all parts of Labrador - will also make investments now that will secure greater benefits from the project development (such as job training).
- Work continues to move ahead on the major projects that dot our horizon including a new refinery near Come By Chance, Hebron, the Lower Churchill, the Long Harbour Nickel plant, and the LNG transhipment facility.
- Any of these projects would be a major event for our province. Having so many projects potentially coming at once is extremely exciting, but also very challenging. That's why Minister Dunderdale and the Department of Natural Resources are leading a multi-departmental working group to ensure we are prepared for all these exciting new developments.
- With good planning and leadership, Newfoundland and Labrador has the resources and the abilities to build a sustainable economy for the people of the province today and for generations to come.
- In Labrador and on the island, the energy sector is one of the many industries that promise strong economic and employment returns on investment.
- The Energy Plan has committed that Government will require proponents of large scale projects fully within our regulatory jurisdiction to include employment plans for women, providing equitable access to all employment opportunities and eliminating barriers that create discriminatory practices.
- Special measures will be required to attract and secure women for occupations where women are under-represented. And through such initiatives as the Skills Task Force we are taking special measures to increase women's opportunities to acquire positions in trades and in non-traditional occupations and sectors.
- Government will identify and facilitate programs to increase the participation of women in professional and skilled trades in the energy sector and will work with stakeholders to ensure that under-represented groups have full access to employment opportunities.

- This Government is committed to advancing the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador by ensuring women share equitably in the social and economic benefits of our society.
- We recognize that women, especially Aboriginal women, continue to face significant barriers that limit full participation in professional and skilled positions in the natural resource sectors and that there is a need for better access to the emerging employment and business opportunities.
- We still have a long way to go, but this government is committed to advancing the issues of Aboriginal women.
- We value integrating women's voices and perspectives, including those of Aboriginal women, when formulating public policy and to supporting an equitable role for women in these sectors.
- By working with developers and stakeholder groups, we are strengthening the support for women's access to employment and business opportunities in these important sectors as developments take place.
- We are exploring all government processes for ways to improve the participation of under-represented groups, Aboriginal people, and especially women. We understand that by improving your access to the many economic opportunities that are on the horizon, the entire province becomes a much stronger and better place to live.
- Inclusion is a vital step on the Path to Prosperity.
- So, as you can see, the natural resource sectors offer many varied opportunities for employment and business.
- These opportunities are immense and varied. I encourage all of you to consider the possibilities for training, employment and business development in the exciting months and years that lie before us.
- Thank you.

APPENDIX F:
Summary of Delegate Discussions

The Voices of Aboriginal Women: Recommendations for an improved economy

Natural Resource Opportunities

- Improved child care supports are required for Aboriginal women in every Aboriginal community so they can participate in opportunities associated with the natural resources in the regions where Aboriginal women live.
- Job mentoring opportunities should be provided by industry for Aboriginal women.
- There is a need for increased job training (ex. heavy equipment, auto mechanic) and support services for women.
- There should be an Aboriginal women's advisory group that has input in training needs related to resource development opportunities.
- Industry needs to provide Aboriginal women with increased support for transition into jobs as well as increased language/interpretation services.
- Funding criteria for resource development and training should be more flexible to include individualized needs of Aboriginal communities.
- Companies need to develop workforce readiness programs and identify types of jobs early in development projects to ensure there is time to develop and deliver training for Aboriginal communities and women.

Economic Development, Employment, Training

- An Aboriginal advisory committee should be established and be empowered to hold community consultations.
- Government departments and industry have to demonstrate an interest in working with Aboriginal women.
- Aboriginal Government's should negotiate IBAs that are inclusive of Aboriginal women.
- Education and training for careers needs to start at an earlier age.
- In order for Aboriginal women to participate in the economy, there is a need for increased childcare/family services such as:
  - childcare funding and education opportunities for caregivers
  - community facilitators for childcare providers
  - free skills development for women who choose to stay home to care for their children and then re-enter the workforce
  - representation from Aboriginal communities is required on municipal governments
- Economic development strategies need to be built at the Aboriginal community level in order to achieve an Aboriginal perspective.
- All levels of government should consult with Aboriginal women/people for their expertise about the unique needs and markets within their communities before policies are structured or decisions are made.

- Aboriginal women need to be considered business and employment partners.
- More employment and permanent work is required for Aboriginal communities and for Aboriginals in the province as well as improved work benefits.
- Long term economic development strategies are required and they need to be proactive, not reactive.
- Government officials need to respect communities and their boundaries when economic development opportunities are being discussed and planned.
- More support for language and culture in the work place is required in Aboriginal communities.
- More locally-based employment training is required.
- Companies need to develop workforce readiness programs and identify the types of jobs early in development projects to ensure there is time to develop and deliver training for Aboriginal communities and women.
- Aboriginal women support the need for an increase to minimum wage.
- More communications-based jobs are needed in Aboriginal communities.
- More incentives for students to complete school should be provided, i.e. guaranteed job placements.
- Industry should support Aboriginal people in trades.
- More Aboriginal women should be hired for decision-making roles.
- The needs of Aboriginal women employees should be listened to by employers.
- Aboriginal women need targeted employment training, and need to obtain leadership skills.
- Funding is required to supplement existing training programs to allow them to be extended to rural communities.
- Aboriginal communities need training instructors that are sensitive to cultural differences.

Tourism & Culture

- More support should be provided for the promotion of cultural tourism and more investments made in the cultural tourism sector.
- Aboriginal women need to be recognized as keepers of communities.
- More support and emphasis is required on environmental issues: economy vs. ecology in Aboriginal communities for tourism development.
- Criteria for Aboriginal cultural tourism need to be developed for communities and tourists.

Women in Resource Development (WRDC)

- Introduce training programs specifically for Aboriginal women.
- Need culturally-sensitive training and language supports.
- Greater emphasis on exposing women to a variety of trades.
- Continue and expand the OTT program.

Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs (NLOWE)

NLOWE could further assist women in Aboriginal communities by:

- Getting to know the needs of Aboriginal communities.
- Holding information sessions in communities.
- Utilizing Aboriginal radio stations and other media to promote their organization.
- Employing Aboriginal women to work with Aboriginal communities.
- Providing assistance in areas such as finance and marketing.

College of the North Atlantic (CNA)

CNA could further assist women in Aboriginal communities by:

- Targeting women to train in heavy equipment operation and skilled trades.
- Hiring Aboriginal people as tutors and trainers in schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Providing Inuktitut speaking counsellors.

Improving Government Consultation Processes

- All levels of government have to recognize that best practices should follow this process of decision:
  - Step 1: Government seeks expertise from Aboriginal community
  - Step 2: Bring opinions back to government to develop the recommendations
  - Step 3: Filter down through various organizations (ex. ACOA, Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network)
  - Step 4: Results – sustainable culturally-based economic plan and policy

APPENDIX G:
Aboriginal Women's Conference 2008 Evaluations

The third annual Aboriginal Women's Conference, *The Path to Economic Prosperity*, took place from March 12-14, 2008 at the Capital Hotel in St. John's. At the end of conference sessions on the last day, evaluation forms were distributed to all 31 delegates that attended the conference. The Women's Policy Office received a total of 27 completed evaluations from those distributed to delegates. Participants were asked to evaluate the meetings, discussions, conference facility, and overall experience of attending the conference. The results of the evaluations are outlined below.

1. Most informative session:

There was a wide range of responses to the most informative session at this year's conference. One third of participants said that all sessions were informative, while six participants identified multiple sessions in their responses, which accounts for a larger total than the number of participants responding.

Tourism, Culture & Recreation = 5
NLOWE = 3
Natural Resources = 2
WRDC = 5
CONA = 4
Youth = 1
Labour Market = 4
Real Women, Real Stories = 1
All = 9
Total = 34

2. Least informative session:

The majority of participants stated that there were no sessions that were uninformative. Most of the participants who responded that the session on College of the North Atlantic was least informative stated that it was because they were already familiar with the college's programs and course offerings. Criticisms of the Natural Resources and Labour Market sessions stemmed from their lack of relevant content to Aboriginal communities. As with the first question, two participants identified multiple sessions in their responses, accounting for the larger number of responses than delegates.

None = 15
NLOWE = 4
CONA = 4
Natural Resources = 3
Labour Market = 3
Total = 29

3. Presenter preparation and openness to questions/concerns:

The majority of participants responded that they believed presenters at the conference were prepared for their sessions and were open to questions and concerns from delegates. The participants who believed that presenters were only somewhat prepared and/or open to questions highlighted the relevance of presentations to Aboriginal women and over-preparedness leading to uninteresting presentations as being primary reasons for their responses.

Yes = 24
Somewhat = 3
Total = 27

4. Time to share ideas with others:

When asked if participants felt there was time at the conference to share ideas with others, the majority said yes. Of the six participants who answered 'somewhat' or 'no', several noted that the time to share ideas was sometimes rushed or too short, and that there needed to be more time for delegates to get to know each other. One participant suggested that the presentations should be shorter and delegate discussions made longer.

Yes = 21
Somewhat = 4
No = 2
Total = 27

5. Timely response to questions/concerns:

25 of the 27 evaluation participants reported that their questions and concerns were responded to in a timely manner. One respondent said no, while another responded that they did not have any questions or concerns during the conference.

Yes = 25
No = 1
No questions/concerns = 1
Total = 27

6. Positive experience at conference:

All 27 participants who completed evaluations stated that the conference was an overall positive experience for them. Some participants made additional comments that the conference was an excellent learning experience, that the conference gets better each year, and that the conference serves as an excellent venue to share ideas between groups.

Yes = 27
No = 0 **Total** = 27

7. Organization, set-up, and comfort of conference facilities:

The majority of participants responded that the organization, set-up, and comfort of session rooms during the conference were satisfactory. Of the seven participants who were only somewhat satisfied with the conference facilities, lack of windows in conference rooms, quality of food, temperature of conference rooms, comfort of chairs in conference rooms, and amount of switching between session rooms during the conference were cited as areas for possible improvement.

Yes = 20
Somewhat = 7
Total = 27

8. Least favourite aspects of conference:

20 out of 27 participants responded 'none' or wrote no response to this question on the evaluation form. The remaining participants had varied responses as to the identification of their least favourite aspect of the conference. Their responses are outlined below.

- some presenters came without information pertinent to Aboriginal women
- too many sandwiches
- the Giving Ceremony should have been for the women of the conference and invited guests should have been presented with gifts separately
- some presenters only focused on Aboriginal women of Labrador, not the island of Newfoundland – good information but not applicable to women living on the island portion of the province
- moving around too much
- Labour Market presentation was hard to follow
- difficult sitting for long periods of time
- lectures that were read out from paper
- no Aboriginal crafts available for purchase

9. Most favourite aspects of conference:

There were varied responses from conference participants regarding their most favourite aspects of the conference. Broadly, many of the participants discussed the conference as an excellent opportunity to meet and discuss with other Aboriginal women, as well as an opportunity to learn from outside groups. Participants' responses are summarized below.

- cultural activities (throat singing, drumming, games, etc.)
- networking/seeing women from previous conferences/sharing stories
- knowledge/learning new aspects of different cultures
- meeting and bonding with other Aboriginal women/supporting each other
- food/banquet/social
- Labour Market and CONA presentations

- gaining input from other Aboriginal women on different subjects
- conference organization (not rushed, had time to focus on day's sessions)
- relaxed atmosphere
- great facilitator

10. Attend similar conference in the future:

All 27 participants said that they would like to attend a similar conference in the future.

Other comments:
Many of the comments received from conference participants re-iterated their enjoyment of this year's conference, their appreciation for being given the opportunity to attend, and requests to be invited next year. Two participants recommended that the next Aboriginal Women's Conference be held in Labrador, while one participant recommended Central Newfoundland and other recommended the West Coast of the island.